CHAPTER 13

THE PRESS: GENDERING THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC

The press was another kind of public space. Periodicals were like cafes-in-print, places the reading public could frequent to pick up information and to entertain themselves. To extend the metaphor further, magazines and newspapers aimed to create and represent a community of like-minded people, much as one might find in a favorite cafe. And as in a cafe-theater show, their headlines and photographs were a stage peopled by characters said to represent an imagined civic order. As a virtual public space, the mandate-era press both reflected and helped to transform gender relations in public and in politics. Like the streets and the cinema, the press underwent its own process of remasculinization in the 1930s, engaging directly in the politics of violence that marginalized women in the civic order.

EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE POSTWAR PRINT COMMUNITY

The end of World War I and the creation of new states had brought the curtain down on the Ottoman cast of players in the pages of the Levantine press. Young Turks were recast with Young Syrians and Arab nationalists while the Sublime Porte in Istanbul was replaced by the French High Commission in Beirut, or perhaps the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. These actors played on a variety of stages. Periodicals bounded the imagined civic order not only in time—the world today, this week, or this month—but in geographical space. A survey of the names of newspapers founded between 1918 and 1921 reveals the many new competing visions of community: In Damascus, *Tongue of the Arabs, New Syria, The East*; in Beirut, *Bayrut, The Syrian Union*, and *Youth of the Cedar* (referring to Mount Lebanon); in Aleppo, *Aleppo, The Syrian Mail, The*

Euphrates, and *Northern Syria*. In one sense, however, all of these newspapers belonged to the same community. They were all marketed to the general, Arabic-reading and news-hungry public that we may call the print community in Syria and Lebanon.[1]

The postwar press became a dynamic and uniquely large political forum in an era of rapid expansion. Damascus averaged four new magazines and four new newspapers a year through the mid-1930s, Beirut slightly more.[2] By 1945, more than 40 Syrian and Lebanese newspapers were being published, in small towns as well as cities. They were joined by more than 300 specialized magazines devoted to literature, education, political satire, women's issues, religion, sports, and even the cinema. While many periodicals were short-lived, the number of survivors steadily grew. The number of daily newspapers publishing simultaneously in Damascus, for example, doubled from seven in 1933 to 14 in 1945.[3] The expansion was foundational. Seven of the Lebanese Arabic-language newspapers established in the mandate period, and four others established before and during World War I survived into the 1970s. These included the popular dailies *Bayrut*, *Lisan al-hal*, and *al-Nahar*.[4] Syrian papers like *Alif Ba'*, *al-Nidal*, and *al-Ayyam* also established a longterm and loyal public, at least until the 1963 Ba'th revolution closed them down.

The key to the boom was the steady rise in literacy, producing an ever larger reading public. According to French estimates, by the early 1930s nearly all Lebanese Christian males could read and the country's overall literacy rate was about 60 percent. Syria's rate was 37 percent.[5] While dominated by urban elites, the ranks of the literate were expanding among the urban middle and lower classes, who, as chapter four showed, were now sending their children to school. And according to a 1930 survey there were nearly as many literate women as men in the major cities: in Beirut, 23,000 men and 16,000 women were counted as literate; in Damascus, 58,000 men and 55,000 women; in Homs, 20,000 men and 15,000 women.[6]

Although it is impossible to ascertain exactly how many people regularly consumed periodicals, it appears that 5 to 10 percent of the total population did. Publication data supplied by all newspapers and magazines in Syria and Lebanon gave a total circulation in 1930 of more than 100,000.[7] These periodicals, especially newspapers, were generally shared. Each copy of a newspaper was likely consumed by five people, including illiterates, for readers routinely recited newspapers and magazines to friends and family in cafes and homes.[8] This suggests a maximum potential print community of 500,000 people in 1930. A more realistic estimate might be closer to 250,000 if we deduct magazines, which were generally less shared, and also account for the likelihood that a small

set of elite individuals purchased several periodicals every week and for the likelihood that publishers inflated their circulation figures. Nonetheless, the size of the print community grew steadily through 1945, as literacy rose, as the number of periodicals published at a time grew, and as the average daily circulation of Arabic-language newspapers rose from 1,000 copies to 1,500. In 1943, 25 Arabic newspapers were published in Beirut, Aleppo, and Damascus alone.[9] It is not unreasonable to estimate that by the mid-1940s the print community in Syria and Lebanon numbered as many as 350,000 people, out of a population of 4.5 million.[10] While small compared to today's standards, the print community was unprecedentedly large, more than ten times the size of the contemporaneous moviegoing public, and perhaps equal to the size of the nascent radio audience.

In its power to propagate images of an ideal society to 250,000 or more people, the press played a critical role in the politics of the civic order. Like streets and cinemas, the press hosted turf wars. Major newspapers became organs of the various political parties, offering partisan, contentious, and competing visions of the ideal civic order: In Beirut, the Jesuits' *al-Bashir* championed a pro-French, Christian-dominated Lebanon; *Bayrut*, Muslim Arabism; *al-Nahar*, owned by the Greek Orthodox Tueni family, middle-of-the-road Lebanese independence; and *Sawt al-Sha'b* was published by the Communist Party. The two main French newspapers divided their loyalties between leading Maronite politicians: *L'Orient* favored Emile Eddé, while *Le Jour* was Bishara al-Khuri's organ. In Damascus, *al-Sha'b* and *al-Qabas* supported the republican nationalism of the National Bloc; *Alif Ba'*, pan-Arabism with sympathy for the return of Hashemite monarchy; *al-Istiqbal*, labor interests. The Damascene French paper, *Les Echos*, was pro-Shahbandar nationalist, opposed to the National Bloc. Newspapers carried on debates about social and political issues, often printing rebuttals to other's editorials, in an effort to popularize their ideologies and shape public opinion.[11] They also, of course, attacked the government, whose censorship powers shaped and often quashed debate. It was not only the French who censored papers; the Syrian National Bloc routinely shut down its opponents' papers while it ruled in the late 1930s.

In its organization as an industry and in the content of its pages, the press mirrored the paternalistic structure of the civic order. As in the pre-World War I era, periodicals were generally run by and aimed at elites; there was no penny press. With exceptions like the Jesuit-run *al-Bashir*, they tended to reflect the views of the nationalist, secularist elite. Most newspapers were run by bourgeois men, often as family businesses. Reporters and writers were almost all male, although a few female journalists writing for the mainstream press emerged by the late 1930s. Religious, workers,' and women's groups, in contrast, generally

published small magazines (the major exception being the Beirut Communist newspaper, *Sawt al-Sha'b*). As in most countries, the structural and ideological biases of these male, elitist newspapers ran counter to social trends that were producing a more universal—cross-class and mixed-sex—readership.

Despite their ideological differences, the major newspapers came to portray a common cast of characters in a strict gender hierarchy.[12] As in the press worldwide today, photographs and headlines on the front page usually concerned male heads of state, politicians, ideologues, and opposition leaders. The casting directors—publishers, editors, and journalists—moved freely between the worlds of the press and politics, and it was not uncommon for them to seek election to public office. Women were very rarely mentioned, and even more rarely featured in the front pages of newspapers. Women who did appear on front pages tended to be foreign, and featured precisely for their atypical activities: foreign queens and princesses, aviatrixes, beauty pageant winners, movie stars, and (always foreign) female soldiers. It was considered by the male press disrespectful to publish not only photographs of local (and especially Muslim women), but also their names. Following social custom, newspapers referred to women by their husbands' names instead. The implicit message in this hierarchy of characters, then as now, was that women and their activities were marginal to the civic order.

Another reason for the relative absence of women, at least in the 1920s, was that many female writers had chosen to focus their energies on women's magazines. As discussed in chapter six, women's magazines proliferated after World War I.[13] Between 1918 and 1933, 13 magazines were edited by women for women (see appendix). By and large, the women publishers were active in an elite, mixed-sex milieu as members of literary salons, as journalists, as speakers at public events, in schools and in charity organizations. But their magazines were constructed quite self-consciously as a forum distinct from that of the male press. Even as they sought integration into the male worlds of politics and culture, women cultivated a separate sphere where their voices could be heard, unmediated by the paternalistic male press.

The women's press was not merely separate: Women publishers aimed to challenge the dominant press's imagined civic order. Their magazines differed radically from the male press in staging a full cast of active, patriotic, and talented women. Mary 'Ajamy's *The Bride* featured stories after the war about European suffragettes and Egyptian women's nationalist demonstrations as models for Syrian women.[14] Each issue of Julia Dimashqiya's *The New Woman* featured biographies of admirable women, lectures on topics like "Mothers in Civil Society" and activities of local girls in schools and girl scout troops.

Some women publishers explicitly linked women's struggle to that of other subalterns in the civic order. *The Mimas Tree* (*Dawhat al-mimas*), founded in Homs in 1928 by 18-year-old Mary Abdu Shakra, offered a unique blend of romanticism and labor ideology. Shakra preached the value of work and education in helping women find solace and liberty.[15] In her second issue she addressed workers, male and female, directly:

> Your soul renounces cruelty and seeks equality and fraternity. On your hands are traces of dust that are immortal and testify to the loftiness of your humble soul. . . . You are the renewer and the reformer of social distortion and defect.

Women, like workers, were oppressed in a paternalistic society:

> I saw you in chains and manacles and I was saddened by your condition. I heard you crying from pain, and you were wandering in the path of motherhood . . . I saw you burdened by marriage and husbandly complaints . . . and I hurried toward the light to rescue you from that lethal entanglement.[16]

Shakra urged women to conquer fear by seeking the solidarity of their sisters, recognizing the gendered social structures that oppress them, and asserting independence from oppressive brothers, husbands and fathers and from excessive household demands.

In the 1930s, however, women's independent vantage point on the civic order abruptly and mysteriously disappeared. Siran Siza's *Armenian Girl* (*Fatat al-armaniya*), founded in Beirut in 1933, was the last women's magazine of the mandate era. By then, all its predecessors were defunct. Afterward, the only magazine started by a woman was Alfira Latuf's *The Future* (*al-Mustaqbal*), which was at first labelled a women's monthly but became a general political magazine.[17]

At first glance, the demise of the women's press appears due to an accumulation of accident and misfortune. Three Lebanese women's magazines were lost when their owners migrated to the Americas with their husbands: Najla Abu al-Lam`'s *The Dawn*, Afifa Fandi Sa'b's *The Boudoir* and Mary Yanni's *Minirva*. Meanwhile, the most prominent magazines shut down for personal reasons. In the period 1925–1926, Mary 'Ajamy simply ran out of money to publish *The Bride*, and Julia Dimashqiya was said to have given up publishing *The New Woman* during an illness.[18] On a practical level, women's magazines had

remained personal enterprises, financed through private funds of elite women and produced largely through their personal efforts. The magazines were consequently quite vulnerable to personal vicissitudes of marriage, migration, illness or poverty. Indeed, the 1930s were a difficult time for all publishers. Many periodicals were bankrupted by loss of advertising and the increased cost of paper due to depreciation of the French franc.[19] Moreover, better-financed, glossy women's magazines from Egypt, which often featured Levantine women, were stiff competition. The Cairo-based *Girl of the East* (*Fatat al-sharq*) and *Ladies' and Men's Review* (*Majallat al-sayyidat wa al-rijal*), for example, were distributed in the Levant in the 1920s and 1930s.

But practical problems cannot fully explain why no one took the place of the first generation of Syrian and Lebanese women's magazine publishers. For there were extremely wealthy women in the movement who could have financed the magazines despite the economic obstacles. There may have been, literally, a generation gap. With the emergence of broader and less personal forms of sociability at public schools, cinemas, and sporting clubs, articles by women who had come of age before World War I may have seemed out of touch with the lives of younger readers. But this does not explain why Mary Shakra, aged 18 in 1928, and Nadima al-Munqari, aged 26 in 1930, published magazines similar to those of their elders. Nor does it explain the irony that just as the women's movement gained momentum with its high-profile conferences between 1928 and 1935, the magazines that had underpinned the interurban linkages of women's groups faded away.

In fact, the magazines' demise was likely linked to the legal and spatial boundaries that limited the building of a truly popular women's movement: Readership did not expand because recruitment to the movement did not. The widening pool of literate, middle-class women was simply not purchasing the magazines. There is an element of despair in the magazines' later articles, and in the subsequent careers of their publishers. Dimashqiya and Habuba Haddad, publisher of *The New Life* (*al-Hayat al-jadida*), appear simply to have tired of their journals, diverting their energy to charities and to writing articles for male-owned magazines. Mary 'Ajamy, who claimed that she gave up the burden of publishing her magazine to devote more time to literature, expressed profound disappointment with what she saw as the lassitude of the women's movement.[20]

The rising climate of hostility toward the women's movement clearly contributed to the closing of one magazine, Nadima al-Munqari's *Woman*, which ceased publishing after only two years, in July 1932. The magazine, which Munqari had intended as a forum for open debate (see chapter seven), quickly became a lightening rod for attacks on women's reform. Like Nazira

Zayn al-Din, Munqari was accused of ignorance and blasphemy and was denounced for making women's uninformed opinions public.[21] Said Munqari years later, "If [women's] voice was silenced for a time, it was because it was strange and new, and as a novelty in the eyes of many people, it was a target for controversy and opposition."[22] Given the radical tinge to women's magazines, one can only imagine the potential reaction of family members should a young woman bring one home.

The end of women's journals did not mean the end of women's journalism. Younger women, as their elders now did and had done before World War I, eagerly took writing assignments from the male-dominated press. Three Lebanese women stand out. Widad Sakakini emerged in 1932 at age 19 as a prominent female writer with the publication of a book of essays, *al-Khatarat*. She would become a regular columnist in magazines like *al-Thaqafa* and *Dimashq*, and a noted fiction writer in the 1950s. Rose Shahfa, a leader of the Lebanese women's movement, also wrote prolifically for a variety of journals. And Imilie Faris Ibrahim contributed articles regularly to *al-Tariq*, a Communist magazine founded in late 1941, and to many other publications.

Images of Gender Roles in the Press

Coincidentally or not, the 1930s brought the women's page to mainstream journalism. Rearticulating the separate sphere ideology advocated by religious groups and now adopted by patriotic mothers of the women's movement, newspapers and magazines were increasingly divided into general news, male spaces devoted to crime reports and political affairs, and women's sections, filled with household tips and cultural items. *Al-Haris*, a Beirut monthly, introduced a column called "Women's Studies" in the late 1920s, located with its "Household Tips" behind front matter on politics. *Les Echos* of Damascus inaugurated a "Women's and Family Page" by 1934, with articles on hygiene, cooking, weight loss, and sewing.[23] A month after its founding in 1936, *Bayrut* introduced a women's column on page 2, with an article on how older women maintain their beauty.[24] Likewise, the Beirut satirical weekly *al-Dabbur* carried columns in the 1930s called "The Male and Female Hornet" (al-Dabbur wa al-Dabbura), and "News of Women's Affairs," usually humorous columns written by men about marriage. The women's pages signalled growing female readership of newspapers, also suggested by the papers' increasing number of advertisements for imported haircare products, perfumes, household appliances, and the like.

By 1935 women had in fact achieved a higher profile in the dominant, male-owned press than they had enjoyed in the 1920s. Their names, pictures, and bylines appeared along with those of men, securing women a place in the imagined civic order of mainstream periodicals. Integration, however, was something of a Faustian bargain. Women writers lost a bit of their souls when their articles were enframed in publications financed and edited by men. The range of issues women addressed narrowed dramatically compared to the 1920s women's magazines, where women were free to write about a variety of topics, including men. While not all women's stories were written by women, female journalists now wrote almost exclusively about their own sex. Women's bylines only rarely appeared on pages devoted to political news. Women's expertise was strictly women, and women's concerns with family, health, and education; not material for page one. And even on women's pages, male experts were often featured as doctors giving housewives medical advice, or as scholars interpreting religious texts on women's proper role in society. Whereas women publishers of the 1920s had used their separate sphere to challenge the gender hierarchy in the mainstream press and in the civic order, by 1935 the women's sphere was reduced to the second-class status of back pages. While women had secured a place in the dominant press's virtual civic order, it was the place of a subaltern.

And while women had secured a voice in the press's civic order, it was a degraded voice. The tone of women's articles was intangibly altered by their new context. For example, as mentioned in chapter eight, Rose Shahfa published an article in the scholarly, pro-fascist Beirut journal *al-Amali* entitled "Motherhood is my Job." Similar to articles in the old women's magazines, it argued that mothers are important to the nation because they are its citizens' first teachers.[25] However, placed alongside other articles published in *al-Amali* at the time—on Islamic thinkers, medical advice by doctors, positive aspects of Mussolini's ideology, French ideas on technical education, and the like—Shahfa's article seems a lightweight, inexpert. *Al-Amali*'s sympathies with fascism further subverted Shahfa's activist intent. Her article appeared in context with other articles that praised mothers for staying home and condemned women who meddled in public affairs. A similar alteration occurred with Widad Sakakini's 1940–41 articles in *Dimashq*, a highbrow, civic-minded journal featuring articles by professors at the Syrian University, urban planners, and government officials. The men wrote on topics of citywide interest like new public health programs, a new museum, and racism in Hitler's ideology. Sakakini's two articles, in contrast, discussed nontechnical topics about the wives and mothers of war heroes and memories of her education.[26] While

Sakakini likely and laudably sought to assert women's place in the city imagined by editors of *Dimashq*, her voice was distinctly emotional rather than professional, personal rather than civic-minded. Whether this was by her own choosing, or that of her editor, is unclear.

Thus the male press did not merely incorporate women writers, but reconstructed anew the subordination of women in its imagined civic order. The content of stories on and off the women's pages systematically constructed a citizenry gendered not on the equivalent terms posed by the women's press, but in terms of hierarchy. Men were rarely portrayed as gendered subjects, while women were staged primarily in terms of their relationship to men. In a survey of more than 500 articles in the Arabic-language press that mentioned women between 1918 and 1945, 42 percent mentioned women primarily in terms of their being mothers or wives. In many of the remaining articles, female subjects were portrayed primarily as men's sisters, daughters, or lovers.[27] This arrangement neatly paralleled the legal and spatial boundaries of the civic order, wherein men were constructed as free agents and representatives of their families in public and politics and women were denied their own identity cards and required to live in the domiciles of their fathers and husbands.

Moreover, women's images in the press were highly normative, falling into four categories of relations with men: the Patriotic Mother, the Good Wife, the Backward Woman, and the Deviant. The Patriotic Mother was called upon to bear many healthy children, particularly boys, and to raise them with high moral standards and loyalty to the nation. The Good Wife was also linked to national welfare, in arguments that a well-ordered home was the cornerstone of a well-ordered polity and that instability between the sexes created national chaos. The Backward Woman was a failed wife and mother whose ignorance retarded the nation's progress and caused untold social ills. The Deviant, on the other hand, actively subverted social health and progress.

These four types were often presented not in the inspirational spirit found in the women's magazines, but to chastise women for transgressing their natural roles. Mothers, for example, were continually admonished to stay home. In a 1931 article against unveiling, a journal published by Islamic-populist students argued: "She [woman] was created to raise for the fatherland distinguished men and loyal youths who will revive the nation and [Muslim] religion."[28] Men's magazines typically scolded mothers for spreading germs to their children, just as the French health service had done (see chapter four), and for working outside the home, because their neglect produced weak-willed youth.[29] The shift toward negative attitudes during the 1930s was often dramatic. In the early part

of the decade, the preeminent Syrian journal of education had routinely employed male and female pronouns in reference to teachers—its title was *Journal of Men and Women Teachers* (*Majallat al-muʿallimin wa al-muʿallimat*)—and opposed the government's ban on married women teachers.[30] In 1936, however, it merged with another journal and changed its name to *Journal of Pedagogy and Education* (*Majallat al-tarbiya wa al-taʿlim*). Not only were women dropped from the title, but reference was made primarily to "men of education" (rijal al-taʿlim) in its articles. The journal also began publishing articles about how God prefers men and intends women to remain in the home, and about how girls should be educated mainly for their future as housewives.[31]

Images of the Good Wife also shifted. In the 1920s, ideal models of wives were offered in articles about the Prophet Muhammad's first wife Khadija and wives of great leaders, like Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and Benito Mussolini.[32] Many of these articles urged wives to be supportive companions rather than obedient slaves to their husbands. By the 1930s, the wifely model was increasingly portrayed in stories about what was perceived as a marriage crisis. Dowries paid to a prospective wife and her family continued to rise despite the depression, making it difficult for young men to marry. In 1933, *al-Dabbur* humorously proposed "Marriage by Installment" as a solution.[33] Many articles also began to criticize changes in wives' behavior: former slaves were becoming disappointments, not companions. *Al-Dabbur* published articles on how education made women poor housekeepers and a regular column on why men preferred to remain bachelors.[34] The browbeaten husband and overbearing wife became common images. Typical was a 1930 cartoon entitled "Marriage in the Honeymoon Month and After," published in *al-Dabbur*'s Damascene counterpart, *al-Naqid*. While the newlywed couple kisses in a small vignette, the "after" image shows the wife dressed in a negligee and fez straddling her husband's back, pulling his tie like a horse's reins and brandishing his cane like a whip (fig. 14).[35] Wives' excessive shopping was lampooned in many cartoons. Their extramural activities led to neglect of family and effeminization of men, as another cartoon, "His Wife is Busy!" complained, showing a man walking a baby carriage (fig. 15).[36]

Most striking in the 1930s was the elaboration of the image of woman as Deviant. An extraordinary number of stories that mentioned women did so in the context of sex, violence, or scandal, usually linked to a suspected moral transgression by the woman. The Deviant represented the dark side of the Patriotic Mother and Good Wife. And unlike the Backward Woman who ignorantly failed to raise patriotic children or be a supportive companion to her husband, she willfully violated the normative terms of gender relationships.

The Deviant model was elaborated on two interconnected levels. First, women became highly sexed in cartoons and photos associated with fashion, beauty products, and glamorous or flirtatious lifestyles of movie stars, flappers, and ladies in gowns at charity balls. While periodicals continued to avoid photographs of Muslim women, by 1930 they had begun publishing not only studio shots of foreign movie stars and beauty queens, but also suggestive drawings of barebreasted women and of short-skirted flappers. Although these images were presented in the pretense of supporting modernity—that the modern woman was sexually free, as opposed to her veiled mother or grandmother—they were clearly suggestive of illicit behavior. The intent was not to demonstrate liberalism but to titillate male readers, as in an *al-Dabbur* cartoon about a woman repairing a car. A male observer remarks, "Women are doing all men's jobs: Look how easily she lies on her back beneath the machine." A second man responds, "Between us, my friend, this is the normal state of affairs" (fig. 16).[37] Women's sexuality was also often portrayed as unnatural, and even freakish. In two months of 1935 *Les Echos* published articles about a hermaphrodite who chose to become male, an "epidemic of virgin mothers" certified by the court as never having had sex, and an epidemic of abandoned babies.[38]

Second, newspapers took an increasingly lurid interest in accidents, criminal attacks, and other forms of violence visited upon women. About one-fifth of the stories mentioning women printed in the 1930s linked the women with violence. The subtext of these stories was to demonstrate the risks women faced if they ventured outside of the home: women were mentioned repeatedly as being hit by cars, kidnapped, lured into sexual intrigue, and raped.[39] In the space of one month in 1936, for example, *Bayrut* published articles on the search for a lost woman, a woman hit by a car, a woman bitten by a dog, a woman killed by her husband, a woman killed in a car crash, a woman who murdered her husband, a man raping a woman, a neglected elderly woman, and a riot started by women.[40]

Descriptions of crimes often suggested that the women had invited attack by deviating from norms. A 1930 Damascus paper reported that a brother fatally stabbed his sister, who had left her husband two years before, because he had seen her in suspicious places at the market a week earlier.[41] Men's behavior was not usually described as criminal, but rather that of honorable brothers and husbands who had been provoked by their women's misdeeds. A story in *Bayrut* mentioned above emphasized that the man had reason to kill his wife, because he suspected she was unfaithful, and that he then turned himself in to the police.[42]

Highly sexed, aggressive women were a danger not only to themselves, but to the nation as well. *Bayrut* gave big play to a story about an English woman who had allegedly lured a Lebanese youth into marriage and then killed him. The paper editorialized: "We are facing a social danger that threatens the Arab family's existence, for there are many cultured youth who marry foreign women" and so deplete the race. "He who marries an Arab girl establishes an Arab family and serves the Arab nation."[43] In a similar vein, stories of female spies played on how they used their attractions to lure men into divulging national secrets. A 1933 scandal reported enthusiastically in *al-Sha'b* involved a French countess who converted to Islam and went on pilgrimage to Mecca—after having killed her Syrian husband. The story speculated that the woman may have been a British spy.[44]

The use of women's images with pornographic or violent references to symbolize social and political decay was not itself new. It was a practice long used in the European press, but only recently exploited in the Levant with the new permissiveness in printing women's pictures. Lynn Hunt has examined one of the most famous examples of the practice, pornographic pamphlets about Marie Antoinette distributed during the French Revolution. Hunt argues that the pamphlets arose from a fundamental anxiety about queenship as the ultimate form of women's invasion into the male domain of the fraternal republic: "The queen, then, was the emblem (and the sacrificial victim) of the feared disintegration of gender boundaries. . . . Women acting in the public sphere . . . lost their femininity and with it their very humanity." Hunt continued, "By attacking Marie Antoinette and other publicly active women, republican men reinforced their bonds to each other."[45]

Syrian and Lebanese women were not for the most part aggressive vamps, despite the prevalence of such press images. But we have seen the high levels of gender anxiety produced by the crisis of paternity underpinned and generalized throughout the population with the stresses on households and changes in labor markets. As in the French Revolution, the fixation on the Deviant model in the 1930s press was likely an expression of those anxieties. Syrian and Lebanese republicans were also revolutionaries, rejecting the paternalism of the former sultan, potential kings, and the high commissioner himself. Republicans substituted fraternity for the lack of a paternal authority, and their concept of fraternity has almost always explicitly excluded women.[46] The Deviant Woman was also, perhaps, a reflection of contemporary French constructions of women as deviants, with the High Commission's regulation of prostitutes and mothers (see chapter four), with the use of textbooks on the French republic in schools, and with the flood of postwar novels and

magazine articles from France that expressed a new age of fear about "civilization without sexes."[47]

The lurid stories may also be interpreted as tales of caution to the thousands of women who were invading male spaces in the urban landscape during the 1930s. This was not a peculiarly Arab or Muslim phenomenon, but rather one related to the growth of cities and polarization of new bourgeoisies and working classes within them around the world. Mary Ryan and Judith Walkowitz have studied the cautionary tales told to, and told about, women who ventured beyond the domestic sphere in nineteenth-century America and England. Ryan describes, in strikingly familiar terms, the blurring of sexual identity perceived in the expanding American cities of the 1850s: "According to newspaper accounts, the lecherous gaze of men was not confined to a single race and could be found in every quarter of each city. The city streets were littered with voyeurs." In a twist, dangerous creatures lurking in the streets included women, particularly prostitutes, who lay in wait for men: "Once deprived of the maternal crown of her femininity, the dangerous female lost her humanity as well." Journalists were shocked and perplexed by the seemingly minimal distinction between the sexes in the slums: "Old and young of both sexes are mingled everywhere. You hardly know the men from the women but for their beards and dress."[48]

Walkowitz likewise situates the British press's fixation on stories about Jack the Ripper in 1880s London within the context of a rapidly changing urban landscape, full of terrains contested by different classes and by the two genders. As in 1930s Beirut and Damascus, London saw the influx of women into previously male spaces. Department stores that attracted bourgeois women, for example, were built near the financial district. According to Walkowitz, newspaper accounts of Jack the Ripper were parables about the immorality of women who walked city streets. The wages of (women's) sin were death: Reaction to the serial murders was to admonish women to stay home and to call on government to clear away dangerous slums and social deviants.[49]

Conclusion to Part Four

Syrian and Lebanese cities were also colonial cities, adding a twist to British and American phenomena. Many nationalist movements have sought to cordon off the home as a sanctuary of tradition, honor, and order, against the baffling and conflictual transformations of public life in a colonial setting. As Partha Chatterjee suggests in the Indian case, middle-class nationalists' defensive strategies

constructed a public-private/male-female dichotomy that created a new colonial patriarchy. While men were forced to interact with the corrupting British in public and politics, women were to preserve India's soul by remaining isolated at home.[50] Similarly in Beirut and Damascus, nationalists and women activists constructed the image of the patriotic mother. Colonial gender anxiety was projected not so much on the poor, but on the elite and particularly on female moviegoers who did who-knows-what in darkened cinemas and on women who went shopping without their husbands' permission. While many women resisted nationalist men's efforts to create a colonial paternalism, they could not hold the line against the rising level of street violence, Islamic populists' campaigns, and the remasculinization of the press. These succeeded in the 1930s in curtailing women's advance into the public with messages of the dangers they faced.

Syrian and Lebanese women could achieve only an ambivalent and marginalized status in public, and so in the civic order. Their role as boundary marker between public and private realms in the city, and their function as pawns in the resolution of rivalries between male groups debilitated their civil rights and so their attempt to build a mass movement. In contrast, the burgeoning male movements of nationalists, Islamic populists, and workers, could assemble, march, and speak with far more freedom. However, women were by no means left out of the new mass politics. Willingly or not, they were ideologically and strategically appropriated by male groups. Because the crisis of paternity remained unresolved, the proper definition of gender roles was integral to the alternative visions of the civic order propounded by newspaper editors, proto-fascists, Catholics, Islamic populists, Communists, and the labor movement. Women's dual role, as totems of national order and as bargaining chips in political conflicts, would become even more salient in the crucial years of World War II, when the mass movements finally succeeded in transforming the structure of the colonial civic order. It is to this transformation that we now turn.